

**Northfield Open Space Committee**  
**Minutes, May 21, 2013**  
**Town Hall – Planning Board Room**

*Items in italics require action prior to next meeting.*

Present: Mike Barry, Bob Hall, Sue Ross, Kate Rossiter, Jenny Tufts, Jerry Wagener

Absent: Joanne McGee

Guests: Annie Chappell

The meeting opened at 7:30. Jenny served as temporary secretary for the meeting.

1. **Agenda:** The Agenda was approved.
2. **Minutes** of the May meeting were approved as amended. Jenny/Bob 6-0
3. Member Comments:

Mike described the recent Open Space Conference. He had done a presentation at the session on Managing Town Lands which was well attended. Jerry and Joanne had participated in the workshop on Conservation 101 where there had been useful information for Conservation Restriction (CR) Monitors. A number of towns have land committees established to conduct CR Monitoring, unlike Northfield which relies on outside volunteers. The Open Space Committee has recommended a Town Forest Committee in the past.

Jenny commented on the FERC relicensing of the hydro-electric system on the CT River expressing her concern that the town needs to get more involved in this complex process. It was suggested that the OSC might write a letter to the Select board asking that a coordinator be appointed to ensure that all the different committees involved have representation. A motion was made to draft such a letter recommending that the BOS participate actively in the FERC relicensing process, to include suggestions for goals. Sue/Bob 6-0. *Jerry announced that he would draft the letter but not before the next meeting.* Jenny also informed the Committee that she and Joan Deely have volunteered to co-chair the Community Preservation Committee.

Bob mentioned the Crag Mountain Trail issue asking if committee members knew of any historic preservation protection of private landholdings with historic significance.

Jerry remarked that he had seen Melissa Cryan at the Open Space Conference. A new copy of the OSRP had been submitted and every indication was that it would receive approval. He also told the committee that Nick Fleck is considering joining the OSC noting that Nick had been the original Chairman of the OSC at its inception.

4. Annie Chappell reported to the committee on the Ad Hoc Group she heads of residents interested in acquiring the NMH land for the use of townspeople. A meeting is scheduled with the BOS on June 25<sup>th</sup>.

A map outlining the proposed boundaries of the Mill Brook wetlands was discussed and circulated by the Chair. (See attached.) All indications are that NMH is now willing to sell the parcels outlined in red (total 75 acres) to the Town. Yellow lines indicate areas that will be cut out for sale to potential buyers of the Golf Course. It was noted that there is a long standing history of Town interest in the wetlands. There was discussion on what this land might be worth on the open market and what NMH might accept as an offer from the Town. The July 17<sup>th</sup> deadline for a land grant application is not a good option for this year but committee members expressed confidence that a combination of CPA funds and grant funding would be adequate to purchase the property with no cost to Northfield taxpayers. Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust (MGLCT) often buys this kind of property to allow time for grant or other fundraising options to develop. It is important that a request be made by the Town to MGLCT if they are to be involved.

A motion was made to authorize Jerry to write a letter to the BOS in support of Town purchase of the Mill Brook wetlands outlining possible sources of financing through grant and CPA funding facilitated by MGLCT. Sue/Mike 6-0

The committee then discussed a map of land west of Pauchaug State Boat Ramp, west of the campus, which an NMH real estate consultant thought might become available as well. It was noted that there are some problems with this property in terms of its becoming a community park:

1. Some of it is in the flood plain
  2. There is a capped land fill of waste from the old Northfield Inn on the property
  3. The land is steeply graded in parts
  4. Not clear what the parking options would be
5. Lastly, Jerry brought up the printing of the new OSRP, assuming it is approved. He has a quote from Lotus Graphics in Brattleboro of \$750 for 40 copies. Jenny will oversee the printing order while Jerry is out of town. It is important that the printing costs be billed to this year's budget so Jerry volunteered to look into getting a purchase order.